

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

Global Connections and Exchange: Multiple Countries

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of Citizen Exchanges Youth Programs Division

ECA/PE/C/PY-09-03

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) issued by the Youth Programs Division for the Global Connections and Exchange program in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast and Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. Proposals must conform to the RFGP, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Applications not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying RFGP, the RFGP is to be the dominant reference.

Applicants desiring more information may contact the following program officer: Anna Mussman, phone: 202-203-7506; e-mail: MussmanAP@state.gov; fax: 202-203-7529.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

The Global Connections and Exchange program is designed to foster interaction and long lasting relationships between secondary schools in the United States and schools in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast and Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. Countries of interest are: Kazakhstan, Maldives, South Africa, Tanzania, Algeria and Yemen. All countries in the above-mentioned region are eligible; however, qualified proposals targeting countries of interest will receive preference.

Grant funding is intended to sponsor activities through virtual environments and face-to-face interactions in both U.S. and overseas schools in order to achieve the following goals: 1) enhance mutual understanding between youth and educators in the United States and their overseas counterparts; 2) improve educational tools, resources, and learning through the application of information technology, online resource development, and student collaboration; and 3) empower youth through online projects, Internet resources and community service activities to act as catalysts of change in their communities.

The grant recipient will be responsible for organizing school-to-school partnerships through online linkages that focus on specific themes and substantive collaborative activities. To enhance diversity and expand opportunities, the Program Office strongly encourages the grant recipient to offer sub-awards to individual U.S. schools and school districts, education technology professionals, and other qualified organizations.

Responsibilities of the grant recipient for this program include:

- Identifying school networks that include a minimum of one U.S. and two overseas secondary schools in each partner country;

- Setting up and maintaining an online vehicle for communication and disseminating information; the web-based presence should allow for interaction, sharing of resources and theme-based activities;
- Developing programs based on project themes that students and teachers work on as a joint project throughout the school year;
- Ensuring quality control for all program elements;
- Coordinating with the Department of State in Washington, the Ministry of Education, and local authorities as necessary throughout the life of the program;
- Designing and implementing an evaluation that assesses the impact of the program on participating schools and individuals;
- Assisting selected schools to conduct people-to-people teacher exchanges, including travel, visa and logistical arrangements;
- Monitoring program activities and reporting on a regular basis to the program office;
- Managing all financial aspects of the grant;
- Conducting follow-up activities and exploring ways to sustain ongoing contact among schools.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

School Linkages

Applicants should identify the U.S. and overseas school networks, consisting of at least one U.S. school and two high schools for each country program. Proposals must describe the basis and rationale of the partnerships, including plans for continuing communication once the grant expires. Proposals should clarify how program activities will be implemented. For example, how will the theme, activities, website development, and overall planning be coordinated? The participating U.S. schools should be accredited secondary schools led by educators with a demonstrated interest in international education.

The U.S. school should also involve a technology coordinator to participate in the development of the website and online activities. Keeping in mind that the technical capacity of overseas schools may be less developed and teachers less technically savvy, the coordinator should consider ways in which s/he can assist overseas schools to participate. The technical coordinator should work with participants to develop lesson plans and activities involving Internet resources to attain the goals of the project. The technical coordinator should also assist with monitoring progress and the final evaluation.

Themes

The Bureau has an ongoing interest in having this program address American Studies and civil society themes, particularly those pertaining to the First Amendment and the critical role of free expression in the development of democracy. Other themes may include ethnic and religious tolerance, gender equity, volunteerism, social entrepreneurship, rule of law, and citizen activism in such areas as the environment and human rights, as well as others. Proposals should clearly describe the selected themes for each partnership project, its importance to schools and communities, the specific activities, and the expected outcome or product of the project.

Student Projects

The collaborative projects will provide a mechanism by which participants can get to know one another and recognize similarities and differences as they work toward common goals. As the purpose is to maintain a high level of student-driven Internet activity, topics should be academic but not too obscure; in other words, they should be accessible and relevant for students with a

particular emphasis on free expression. Projects should be of a determined duration with tangible, presentable outcomes. Students should create blogs, journals, and other digital productions in which they can express themselves freely via the Internet. Participating schools should also partake in global initiatives including International Education Week and Global Youth Service Day. Students are expected to participate in international competitions and events such as Doors to Diplomacy, America.gov chats, and other web-based events sponsored by the State Department and other international organizations..

Dissemination of Outcomes

The grant recipient will assist participants in disseminating reports on their work, including interactive presentations, survey results, etc. Projects, lesson plans and other resources must be available online for others to access easily.

Educator Exchange

This grant will support the travel of a small number of American teachers to visit partner schools to gain first hand knowledge of the country and the school system, particularly how schools use technology in the classroom. The exchange must occur while schools are in session; the minimum duration of the stay is three weeks. Participants will live with host families, visit the partner school and, as much as possible, learn about the history, culture, political institutions, and environment of the area. During the exchange, teachers should work together with their partners, including students, to solidify the theme of the project. In addition, teachers should have opportunities to experience community life, including educational excursions and cultural activities. Teachers should create an online journal so that students can follow their experiences and interact virtually. A community service project is recommended.

Exchange Program for American Educators

American teachers should offer training classes to discuss student-centered teaching practices, integrating Internet resources into daily lessons, Project Based Learning methodology, and other teaching techniques of interest. In addition, the American teachers should make class presentations about U.S. community life, citizen participation in a democracy, and the diversity of American culture.

Please note: Due to security concerns, American teachers are prohibited from traveling to Yemen and Algeria through this grant. Instead, teachers from these countries will travel to the U.S. on the exchange (see below). In regard to other countries in North Africa and the Middle East, the grant recipient should consult the State Department's travel advisory to verify whether Americans are able to travel to specific countries. Information can be found at: <http://travel.state.gov/>. In all cases, the grant recipient should consult with the program office before making arrangements for Americans to travel overseas.

Exchange Program for Teachers from Algeria and Yemen, and possibly other North Africa and Middle East Countries

Overseas teachers will visit their partner schools and live with American host families for no less than three weeks. Ideally, the teachers will shadow their partner teachers and make presentations in classrooms about their respective countries. There should be opportunities for discussion regarding methodologies and use of technology in daily lessons.

Responsibilities for Conducting Exchanges

The grant recipient should work with host schools and families to furnish them with written guidelines to ensure that they have well-developed plans for:

- Orienting the exchange participants prior to travel and at arrival to provide the tools necessary for them to function effectively and have a successful experience;

- Avoiding and dealing with conflicts and misunderstandings that may arise - it is important that each school set aside time on a regular basis to address the visitors' expectations and concerns and adjust the program accordingly;
- Introducing the visitors to the community – its leaders and institutions;
- Ensuring exchange participants have ample time to write travel journals and interact with their students online;
- Conducting educational excursions that serve to enhance the visitors' understanding of the history, culture, political institutions, ethnic diversity, and environment of the region.
- Facilitating meetings with the Public Affairs Section and local education authorities.

The Department is interested in finding ways to provide visibility for the travelers, including media coverage in their communities and meetings with local and state government representatives.

Follow-on and Sustainability

The grant recipient should provide ideas for maintaining contact among students and educators participating in the program. Open source software should be used as much as possible. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of available web-based resources, such as free social networking sites and existing online education projects developed by and for teachers. Partner teachers should disseminate information about the program widely and attempt to bring on new teachers to participate in new projects in the future.

Evaluation

In order to demonstrate that the project is working toward the ECA goals outlined in the overview, applicants should devise specific objectives and link their program outcomes to those objectives. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time framed. The desired outcomes are not simply the successful implementation of the project activities but rather a measure of how the program activities will lead to the transformative effects expressed in the program goals.

The evaluation plan should describe specific activities and how these activities will be evaluated. Proposals should define indicators, that is, the concrete, observable activities that will demonstrate progress toward desired results.

Proposals should include a description of evaluation instruments and methodology, as well as how data will be organized, analyzed, and reported. The grant recipient is required to submit one interim program report, one final report and financial reports to ECA's program and grants office. In addition, the grantee is required to submit monthly newsletters highlighting activities. The Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy and the respective Ministry of Education should be informed on a regular basis regarding program activities and progress.

The final report should answer the following questions **in detail**:

1. How did the program benefit overseas and American schools and communities?
2. How did the program serve USG foreign policy interests?
3. How will the program continue once funding expires?
4. How should the program be improved and expanded if funding is available?

The following items should be included in the final evaluation:

- Stated objectives
- Indicators
- Method(s) of measurement

Web Presence

A web presence for each partnership project should be established early on in the program to reflect program goals and activities. Additionally, the websites should serve as a resource in which participants can share information. Websites should include a special space for teachers to post lesson plans in all subject areas with a particular focus on English and American Studies. Information about ECA programs, alumni and other international initiatives should be made available on the websites. To ensure sustainability of this project, free websites such as Ning and Facebook should be used to encourage ongoing communication and collaboration. Participants should also be encouraged to log on to ECA's ExchangeConnect site as a way to communicate internationally with people outside their immediate networks.

The websites should be user-friendly and easily identifiable, with links to ECA and other Global Connections programs. Program participants should be trained to post content on a regular basis, including activities, photos, blogs, videos, etc. The websites should acknowledge Global Connections as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. Please refer to the section of this POGI for additional information branding, alumni follow-on and engagement, and private public partnerships.

Outreach

The applicant should highlight the program in diverse educational spheres, both nationally and internationally. Efforts should be made to publicize program activities in the media, education publications and online environments, including journals, newsletters and listservs. Presentations at conferences are strongly encouraged. All representational activities should clearly acknowledge the Department of State's support.

The ECA program office should be notified of recent events in a timely fashion. Program highlights should be succinct and written in journalistic format. Exchange participants should make special efforts to reach out to as many community members as possible to share cultural information and promote program efforts, both during the exchange and after they return to their home countries. Visual and virtual exposure of this program is of high priority.

PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items:

TAB A – Application for Federal Assistance Cover Sheet(SF-424)

TAB B – Executive Summary

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
4. Scope and Goals
 - Number and description of participants/schools
 - Themes
 - Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
 - Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
 - Fields covered
 - Anticipated results (short and long-term)

TAB C – Calendar of activities/itinerary

Narrative

In no more than 20 double spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below:

1. Vision

Clearly outline the specific goals, objectives and desired measurable outcomes of this project. These will form the basis for evaluation.

2. Participating Organizations and Schools

The proposal must clearly list all organizations and schools involved. Letters of support from school administrators are mandatory and must indicate a commitment to all requirements of the program, including hosting/sending teachers during the school year for a minimum of three weeks (see Tab E).

3. Program Activities

Describe how the project will be implemented and coordinated. Clarify the overall themes and describe online activities that will support these themes. Include details on how the teachers and students will communicate with one another and what the final product will be and how it will be presented. Proposals that involve other organizations and experts and clearly describe academic activities for both students and educators will be most competitive. Be sure to describe the overall impact of the project, that is, the wide audience of school and community members that will benefit from the program.

4. Selection

In the proposal, describe the recruitment and selection process for U.S. and overseas schools and exchange participants. In order to maximize the multiplier effect, applicants should strive to select teachers for the exchange who demonstrate a commitment to teaching and expect to remain in the school for several more years.

5. Teacher Exchange

Orientaton

Describe how exchange participants will be prepared prior to their travel and upon arrival. Teachers should be provided with information on the following: details about the host family; stereotypes; planned program activities; adjustment issues; personal health and safety considerations; logistics, including money, communications, travel, food, etc.); and any matters

relevant to the project. Host families should also receive information about the exchange teacher, culture, etc.

Transportation and Logistics

Explain the plan for airline ticketing, including how it will be secured. *Important: All transatlantic or transpacific travel must be on a U.S. carrier.* Applicants partnering with Near and Middle East countries should show an understanding of the visa process. The Youth Programs Division will prepare DS 2019 forms for participants to obtain J-1 visas for entry into the United States; the applicant organization will be responsible for obtaining visas for the American teachers. The grant recipient will be responsible for submitting appropriate information to the Bureau in a timely manner before participant travel. Travel within the host country during the exchange component should also be explained.

Applicant organizations are required to use the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for participants in Bureau-funded exchanges.

6. Diversity

Describe how various program elements will promote an understanding of geographic, ethnic and socio-economic diversity in the foreign country and the U.S.

7. Outreach

Describe ways in which information about the program will be disseminated in participating schools and communities as well as in other venues.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Bureau program officers must be kept informed of the time line and implementation of each phase of the program. Overseas schools must keep the Public Affairs Section staff at the U.S. Embassy informed of the program. Clarify how this will be accomplished. The grant recipient will be responsible for providing one interim report and one final report. The reports will focus on measuring the level of achievement of stated goals and objectives.

9. Follow-on Activities

Proposals must outline the plan of action to maintain relationships between partner schools beyond the life of the Bureau's funding with a focus on virtual exchanges of information, continuing joint projects, etc. In order to keep the Bureau informed of the success of the partnership, the grant recipient is encouraged to submit updates summarizing ongoing activities at least one year after the program has been completed.

10. Project Management

Briefly describe international exchanges, online collaborative projects, and other past experiences relevant to this project. Identify by name the primary U.S. and overseas staff who will be implementing this project. Resumes should be included in Tab E.

11. Work Plan/Timeline

Please provide a timeline of activities for the life of this grant, including anticipated dates for the teacher exchanges.

TAB D – Budget Submission

Budget Information – SF-424A

The grant provides \$250,000 for this Global Connections and Exchange project. Applicants are strongly encouraged to offer sub-awards to qualified organizations and are requested to provide as much cost-sharing as possible, including investment by the private sector.

Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) regarding guidelines for a budget submission. An explanatory budget narrative must also be included.

Suggested program costs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Participant travel
- Exchange programs should be as cost efficient as possible; Bureau funds should not be used to subsidize lengthy excursions/field trips outside the host community.
- Per diem: overseas teachers should receive up to \$10 a day while in homestays. American teachers should provide their own pocket money. Costs paid by participants should be listed as cost-sharing in the budget.
- Visas: There is no charge for J-1 visas that will be used for entry to the United States. Charges for visas to overseas countries should be listed in the budget as either a grant-funded or cost-shared item.
- Education materials: Organizations may propose budgeting up to \$250 for each overseas school for the purchase of educational materials. Bureau funds may be used for the purchase of software or equipment such as digital cameras, webcams, etc. to support online project work. Applicants should primarily seek out donations or acquisition of equipment through outside sources.
- Administration expenses: The grant may be used to pay reasonable costs for program administration, technical support and other administrative needs. Cost sharing in these areas is strongly encouraged.
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Justifiable expenses directly related to program activities
- Follow on activities

TAB E –

Letters of Endorsement

Proposals must include letters of agreement from all participating schools indicating support for the exchange in principle, endorsement of the proposed themes and joint projects, and explicitly agreeing to host/send exchange delegations for a minimum of three weeks during the school year. Letters from collaborating organizations should indicate the role they will play to support projects. Letters from politicians are generally not helpful.

Resumes

Resumes of all program staff, including technical coordinator, should be included in the submission. No resume should exceed two pages.

TAB F –

1.) SF-424B, "Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs".

2.) First time applicant organizations and organizations which have not received an assistance award (grant or cooperative agreement) from the Bureau during the past three (3) years, must submit as an attachment to this form the following: (a) one copy of their Charter OR Articles of Incorporation; (b) a list of the current Board of Directors; and (c) current financial statements. Note: The Bureau retains the right to ask for additional documentation of those items included on this form.

3.) **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

4.) Include other attachments, if applicable, i.e. the SF-LLL form, etc.

Appendix

Applicants are welcome to include sample documents, such as brief school profiles, application forms, evaluation surveys, and orientation agendas, as well as other program related material in an appendix. Please be aware that too much additional paper can detract from the proposal.

IV. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The RFGP indicates the date the complete proposal submission is due and the address at the Bureau to which the submission must be sent. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline.

For further information regarding this program or the competition, call Program Officer Anna Mussman, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Youth Programs Division, (202) 203-7506; e-mail: MussmanAP@state.gov